

# THE AFRICAN SUNSET

*D Yogananda Rao\**

*In the Savannas of Africa,  
the tired sun, now orange hued, sets on another day,  
diffusing a blood-stained glow on the interminable plains.  
The occasional acacia tree gathers darkness in its gnarled and prickly  
branches.*

*Caught, as they are in the throes of a calming breeze,  
The reluctant grass stalks, sun-blached, tremble.*

*The frenzied hooves have halted their tread,  
conferring a brief respite to the deeply scarred earth.  
The ungainly, bearded wildebeest, the painted zebras and the nimble gazelles  
all twitch their nervous tails,  
resisting their instinct to graze, look up every now and then.*

*Perhaps they know that here, as else where, death is never far away.*

*A slithering cheetah, hunching its slender body,  
breaks the cover of the ripened grass  
and cleaves a passage amidst the ruminating herds.  
Its tear-stained eye must have honed on to an errant gazelle*

*The grand spectacle the tourists pay a fortune for, unfolds yet again:  
a cheetah at full tilt ,  
the blurring rosettes.  
The chase is over in a blazing flash.*

*Poem*

*The fragile cat pants, fighting with its racing heart and sky-rocketing body  
heat,  
gazing at the horizon, licks off the gathered speck of dust on its paws.,  
and checks on the stout hearted gazelle's fading heart beat*

*The trickle of blood recedes.  
The scattered herds regroup and resume their grazing,  
The dust in the cheetah's trail, as tranquility, descends.*

*What have the living to do with the dead?  
Time ticks and the night claims its right.*

*The sky has turned deep purple, as it usually does  
at this time of the day in Africa.*

*The spotted hyenas have scented blood.*

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*\*Associate Professor of English, St Claret College, Bangalore,  
e-mail : yoganandkoregmail.com*

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